

Diversity Matters

Citizens' Unity Commission

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From the Director's Desk

Continuing a long history with the Citizens' Unity Commission (CUC), Michèle Woods Jones assumed the role of directing the work of the City of Hampton in the areas of diversity and inclusion on July 1, 2012. As Executive Director of the CUC, she is responsible for overseeing the activities of both the CUC and the Ad Hoc Leadership Group.



Her relationship with the CUC dates back to 1994. As the Senior Consultant of LeAun Consulting Services, she has rendered distinct services and support to the CUC since its inception. She was hired to work with the initial group of citizens tasked by the Hampton City Council to develop a process for addressing race relations in the city. In addition, she has actively engaged in providing services to citizens and employees, including a six month assignment as interim Executive Director of the CUC and more than sixteen years as a facilitator/trainer in the Hampton Diversity College. Outstanding evaluations demonstrated that she had garnered respect, trust and confidence in her abilities to listen, lead and solve problems in the City of Hampton.

Michèle is an experienced professional in the fields of communication, multicultural relationship building, interpersonal/intergroup conflict resolution and diversity/inclusion. She has combined her skills in counseling, communication, leadership development and conflict intervention with organizational development strategies and a series of strategies and training models developed for a wide array of organizations. She has provided facilitation, training and coaching services for various cities, businesses, school systems and educational institutions, and community services organizations.

Michèle received her undergraduate degree from the University of California, Berkeley and her graduate degree in Counseling Psychology from California State University, East Bay, where she also received Counseling Credentials for K-12, Community College and Marriage and Family Counseling. Michèle's post graduate training and certification includes Organizational Development and Leadership Development at the University of California Management Institute, Irvine, Calif., and Community Mediation, Collaborative Negotiation and Cross-Cultural Conflict Resolution at the Teacher's College, Columbia University, New York, N.Y. She also has certification in Diversity and Inclusion, Cross-Generational Communication, International Conflict Mediation and a Residency Certification – Quality of Work Life Practitioner.

Peace and harmony are highly sought attributes of a valued community. Not only do cross-cultural, interpersonal relationships foster awareness and understanding of individual differences, but knowledge about the nature and dynamics of the many dimensions of diversity promotes greater opportunities for the community to thrive.

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"We can change the world if we just start listening to one another again."

Margaret J. Wheatley

Opening the Book on Diversity Book Group

Meets 2nd Tuesday of each month at the Main Branch of the Hampton Public Library @ 7:00 p.m.

January - No meeting
February - "The Glass Castle" by Jeanette Walls
March - TBA

From the Director's Desk continued...

Hampton has established a history of success in its multi-faceted approach to cross-cultural harmony and the work of the CUC is evolving in ways that can best engage the community. Input from citizens and former and current members of the CUC, Michèle has been actively involved in designing a series of initiatives to help citizens and employees explore how positive relations between people who are different can enrich a community and serve as an asset. The key initiatives for 2013-14 are:

- Circles of Diversity – Faith Community Dialogue
- Multicultural Parent Academy
- Dining & Dialogue Engagement
- Movie & Mic Film Series
- Neighborhood Commission Partnership
- Hampton University Institute on Diversity & Inclusion
- Alternatives Youth Diversity Development Project

These initiatives offer a variety of collaborative tools that engage and educate citizens and employees with respect to multicultural competence. Michèle's top priorities are to:

- Maintain the integrity of the work of the CUC and AHLG to date
- Assure continuity in successful work products
- Provide well-informed, professional management skills and experience
- Direct and provide the necessary support and accountability required to sustain effectiveness and provide leadership in creating options for more citizen-directed and community-managed collaborations.

Michèle Woods Jones
Executive Director
Citizens' Unity Commission

Hampton Diversity College

It's finally back! That's right, its back. The Hampton Diversity College is back! In response to questions about its return and requests about registration, here's the "good news!" The first level of the Hampton Diversity College will begin in March 2013! It's an 8-week session full of a variety of diversity topics and interactive activities that will keep you waiting for the next session and dreading the end of the series.

Sign up and come join us. Flyers and applications are ~~now~~ available online, so you can check to see which dates and times best fit your schedule and complete your application. Just go to www.hampton.gov/unity

2013 Unity Awards

GET YOUR NOMINATIONS READY!!! Yes it's almost time for the 2013 Unity Awards nomination. Applications should be available Feb th. This award was established in 2000 to recognize the contributions of individuals, organizations and initiatives that have made a positive impact on supporting the importance of diversity in the city of Hampton. Visit our website Feb 20th for the application and deadline dates at www.hampton.gov/unity. If you have any questions call 728-3279.

Diversity Calendar

■ JANUARY

National Mentoring Month

In recognition of the positive impact mentoring has on youth, the Harvard School of Public Health and MENTOR: The National Mentoring Partnership, combined their efforts and inaugurated National Mentoring Month in 2002. Enjoying support from the U.S. President and members of Congress, NMM raises awareness, recruits individuals and promotes the growth of mentorship programs throughout U.S. communities.

1st Solemnity of Mary – Christian (Catholic): A liturgical feast that celebrates Mary's motherhood of Jesus.

5th Guru Gobind Singh's Birthday - Sikh: Celebrates the 1666 birth of the tenth Guru of the Sikhs.

Sabbat - Jewish: One of the most important holy days for the Jewish people.

6th Carnival Season begins - Christian, International. The period from the Christian observances of Epiphany to Shrove Tuesday is called Carnival and culminates in Mardi Gras.

Epiphany—Christian: Occurring 12 days after Christmas, it celebrates the visit of the Three Wise Men (Kings or Magi) to the baby Jesus, who later became known as Jesus Christ.

14th Makar Sankranti - Hindu: A major harvest festival that commemorates the beginning of harvest season and Pongal festival.

20th World Religion Day - Baha'i: Celebrating unity among a diversity of faiths.

24th Mawlid al-Nabi - Islamic: Celebrates the birthday of the Prophet Muhammad, founder of Islam.

26th Tu B'Shevat - Jewish: Marks the beginning of a "New Year for Trees."

27th Mahayana Buddhist New Year – Buddhist: A celebration of the new year for Mahayana Buddhist.

■ FEBRUARY

African American History Month

An annual celebration to honor and commemorate important people and events in African American history. Begun in 1926 as "Negro History Week" by historian Carter G. Woodson to raise awareness, it expanded in 1970 to a month. The week was met with enthusiasm and prompted the creation of black history clubs and increased interest from educators and progressive whites. Woodson's hope was that the month would eventually be eliminated when black history became fundamental to American history.

1st Imbolc - Celtic, Pagan: A festival celebrating the beginning of spring.

2nd Candlemas – Christian: Celebrates the presentation of the baby Jesus, the Christians' Savior, in the Temple of Jerusalem and the purification of Mary 40 days after his birth.

13th Ash Wednesday - Christian: The first day of Lent, a period of prayer and fasting.

15th Vasant Panchami - Hindu, Sikh: A festival in honor of Saraswati, the goddess of knowledge, music and art celebrated on the first day of spring.

24th Purim - Jewish: A joyous commemoration of the deliverance of the Jews of Persia in the sixth century BCE from a plot by Haman, the king's advisor, to annihilate them.

26th Ayuam-i-Ha - Baha'i: Intercalary days to adjust the Baha'i calendar to the solar year.

■ MARCH

Women's History Month

A time to celebrate women and promote equality among the genders. Women's History Month has its origins dating back to 1909 with the first National Women's Day in February of that year. The first Women's History Week was observed in 1978 in California, and by 1981 it had become a national event. In 1987 Congress extended it for the entire month.

10th Maha Shivaratri (Shiva's Night) – Hindu: An ancient Thracian celebration marking the end of winter and arrival of spring blossoms.

19th St. Joseph's Day - Christian: The Feast of St. Joseph honors Saint Joseph, husband of the Virgin Mary.

20th Ostara - Celtic, Pagan: In the Northern Hemisphere today marks the vernal equinox.

24th Palm Sunday—Christian: Commemorates the day Jesus Christ was given a king's entry into Jerusalem the week before his crucifixion and resurrection.

26th Pesach (Passover) –Jewish: An 8-day festival marking the liberation of the Israelites from bondage in Egypt.

27th Holi (Festival of Color) - Hindu, Sikh: Celebration of spring throughout Northern India that is a time of fun followed by relaxation.

28th Maundy (Holy) Thursday – Christian: Also known as Holy Thursday. Observed the day before Good Friday, commemorating Jesus Christ's last supper and the initiation of Holy Communion.

29th Good Friday - Christian: Celebrated the Friday before Easter Sunday, commemorating the crucifixion of Jesus Christ.

31st Easter – Christian: Celebrates the resurrection of the Christian Savior, Jesus Christ.



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UPCOMING EVENTS

★ JANUARY

8th

No meeting - CUC Opening
the Book on Diversity
Hampton Public Library

10th

CUC General Monthly
Meeting

10th

MLK Senior Informational
& Education Forum –
Northampton Community
Center @ 9am – 1pm.
727-1857 or 727-1858 for
more info.

29th

Ad Hoc Leadership Group
meeting 6:30 – 8:30 p.m.

★ FEBRUARY

14th

CUC General Monthly
Meeting

9th Black History
Month event – VA Air
and Space Center
11:00a.m-3:00 p.m.

12th

Hampton Public
Library: CUC Opening
the Book on Diversity
Book Discussion Group
@ 7:00 p.m.

19th

Ad Hoc Leadership
Group meeting 6:30 –
8:30 p.m.

★ MARCH

12th

Hampton Public
Library: CUC Opening
the Book on Diversity
Book Discussion
Group @ 7:00 p.m.

14th

CUC General Monthly
Meeting

6th-April 24th

HDC – Level I

19th

Ad Hoc Leadership
Group meeting 6:30 –
8:30 p.m.

**For more information
on any upcoming
events please call or
email me at the
contact info listed
below.**

Feedback

Let Us Know What You Think!

Questions? Comments?
Suggestions!

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